

Department of Human Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



Articles in Today's Clips Monday, April 7, 2008

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	2-10
*Day Care	11-12
Domestic Violence	13-14
Homelessness	15-16
Low-Income Housing	17-21
Health Care	22
Food Assistance	23-24
2-1-1	25
News Release	26-27

*Important story at this spot

Father gets 6-30 years for sexually assaulting his adopted daughter

By Michael P. McConnell
Daily Tribune Staff Writer

BERKLEY -- Gerald Snapp, convicted of incest and sexually assaulting his adopted daughter who gave birth to their child, was sentenced to serve up to 30 years in prison.

Snapp, 43, of Berkley was sentenced Thursday by Oakland County Circuit Judge Mark Goldsmith to serve from 6 years and nine months to 30 years in the case.

Rather than face a trial, Snapp last month pleaded guilty in the case to eight felony counts of criminal sexual assault on his adopted daughter, now 22 years old.

"We're happy with the sentence because Mr. Snapp is going to be with the (state) Department of Corrections for a long time," said Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Robert Giles. "His sentence will be reviewed by the parole board after 81 months and he will more than likely serve more than the minimum sentence."

The adopted daughter testified in Berkley District Court in February that Snapp began sexually assaulting her when she was 15 years old.

The assaults began within months of when victim first arrived as a foster child at the home Snapp shared with his wife and other children, prosecutors said.

Later, the Snapps adopted her as their daughter and the sexual assaults all took place between 2000 and 2003, according to prosecutors.

When she was 18 the adopted daughter testified how she gave birth to a daughter.

Snapp was identified as the father of the child based on DNA testing.

He previously had visitation rights with the daughter he had with his adopted daughter.

"It was concern for the child that resulted in Mr. Snapp being charged in this case," Giles said.

The child told her mother that Snapp had molested her, Giles said. The mother then took the child to be interviewed by professionals at CARE House, a facility for abused children run by the Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Oakland County.

"It was then that we discovered all the things that had been done to the victim in this case," Giles said, adding that prosecutors didn't have a strong enough case against Snapp in the abuse against the daughter he fathered by his adopted daughter.

Prosecutors said it was easier on the victim in the case to avoid having to testify at a trial.

"The victim is a remarkable young woman," Giles said. "She is working and raising a child she didn't necessarily want and taking good care of her. She has had a difficult life compounded by Mr. Snapp's behavior. She is a productive member of society and doing everything she can to raise her child properly."

Infant's mother makes false CSC report

Stephanie Schneider
Spinal Column

April 02, 2008 - An argument between three people sharing a Highland Township trailer reportedly led to false reports of criminal sexual conduct (CSC) involving an 8-month-old child, and the arrest of the infant's mother.

A 25-year-old Highland woman, an alleged registered sex offender who owns a trailer in the 2400 block of Bruce Street, called the Oakland County Sheriff's Department Highland Substation at 5:13 a.m. on Saturday, March 29, after her friend, a 17-year-old White Lake girl and the mother of the infant, threatening her. She said the 17-year-old had been "thrown out of her house" and was staying in the trailer's living room for a while. Another 25-year-old Highland woman also shares the trailer, paying \$250 a month in rent.

After arriving, deputies separated the occupants and questioned all three about what had happened.

According to the trailer owner, she had gone to her mother's house the night before and returned home to find that the renter had brought her brother and a friend over. The owner had forbidden the renter from bringing friends over while she was gone, and the women reportedly argued when the trailer owner returned home.

After the argument, the trailer owner reportedly went to her bedroom with her boyfriend. Meanwhile, the renter, the 17-year-old girl and their friends were allegedly playing loud music in the living room.

According to the owner, she went out and asked for the music to be turned down, only to have it be turned up. After this, she returned to the living room and unplugged the radio and nearly came to blows with the 17-year-old.

The 17-year-old then allegedly threatened the trailer owner, "because (the 25-year-old owner is) a sex offender." The trailer owner then called 911.

When deputies arrived, the 17-year-old filed a report against the trailer owner, stating that the owner allegedly fondled her son. When questioned, the renter also stated that she allegedly witnessed the trailer owner touching the child in a sexual manner.

The three women were brought to the Highland Substation for additional questioning. Deputies asked the 17-year-old why she wasn't at home with her parents, and she replied that she had a pending domestic assault charge against her for allegedly attacking her 12-year-old sister, and was forbidden from returning home. She added that she couldn't stay with her child's father, since he was a witness in the domestic assault case.

The 17-year-old's mother was called. After speaking with the girl's mother, deputies found that the 17-year-old allegedly had assaulted her mother, her 18-year-old sister, and her 12-year-old sister. Her mother stated that her daughter had "burned all the bridges" she had, and had nowhere to stay.

Deputies asked the girl's mother if her daughter was a "credible witness," and the woman said she wasn't.

"(She) uses verbal manipulation and intimidation to get what she wants," the mother reportedly told deputies. "She's not credible."

The 17-year-old's story and the renter's account were found to have conflicting time lines, and the diagrams each had been asked to draw showed the trailer owner standing in opposite points of the living room during an alleged incident.

After being informed that her story was inconsistent, the 17-year-old was asked to rate her level of truthfulness, which she estimated at "80 percent."

The renter was informed that this was her chance to tell the truth, and that charges would be filed if it was determined that a false CSC report had been made. The renter then admitted that she had never seen the trailer owner fondle the child, and had gone along with the 17-year-old's story due to anger toward the trailer owner.

The 17-year-old was arrested for making a false police report, a felony which is punishable by four years in prison, and/or a \$2,000 fine.

"(The 17-year-old) was given several opportunities to tell us the truth about what happened," said Sheriff's Department Detective Steven Zdravkovski of the Highland Substation. "(She) continued to change her story about what transpired between (the trailer owner) and her son."

The girl was set to be arraigned Monday, March 31, after press time.

"The important thing is that we stopped someone innocent from being sent to jail," Zdravkovski said.

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **hometownlife.com**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Apr 3, 2008

Local predator faces federal charges

The Novi Police Department assisted the FBI in the arrest of Jaime Michael Villanueva, 21, at his Novi apartment off Pontiac Trail last Monday.

Villanueva is accused of driving to Sand Springs, Okla. to pick up a 13-year-old girl, who he allegedly brought back to his apartment, had sex with three times and showed her child pornography, reports said.

During the arrest, Novi Police Chief David Molloy said they were successful in securing and gaining custody of the girl.

According to Television station WXYZ (Channel 7), The Oakland University student is being brought up on federal charges of online enticement, transportation of a minor to engage in criminal sex and possession of child pornography.

The Oklahoma teen's mother reported her missing, and through investigation of the victim's friends and computer, officials were able to trace the missing girl to Villanueva, reports said.

At that time the FBI initiated contact with the Novi Police Department seeking assistance in the arrest of the Novi resident.

"My understanding was it was an Internet meeting," Molloy said.

Villanueva has been released on bond and is under the supervision of his parents.

The case remains under investigation by the FBI.

ClickOnDetroit.com

Girl, 3, Critical From Self-Inflicted Gunshot Wound

POSTED: 5:21 pm EDT April 6, 2008
UPDATED: 7:37 pm EDT April 6, 2008

DETROIT -- A 3-year-old child shot herself in the head Sunday on Detroit's west side after she found a loaded weapon and fired it, police said.

According to Detroit police, Kyra Thomas, 3, shot herself on the right side of her head and was transported to Sinai Grace Hospital, where she is reported in critical condition.

Police said all the adults in the household, located near Interstate 96 and Lahser Road, are being questioned and checks are being run on the weapon.

Neighbors said they heard only one shot. One neighbor called 911 after the baby's mother, covered in blood, ran outside screaming.

Another neighbor said the incident frightened the neighborhood.

"It's frightening, you know, because you're just standing right next door to something somebody gets shot -- and a baby, an infant, that's terrible," she said.

Copyright 2008 by [ClickOnDetroit.com](http://www.clickondetroit.com). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

RELATED TO STORY



Video: Girl, 3, Critical From Self-Inflicted Gunshot Wound

Hastings teen shoots, kills friend, tells police he thought handgun was empty

Posted by [John Tunison | The Grand Rapids Press](#)

April 07, 2008 05:18AM

HASTINGS -- As a 14-year-old boy's family mourned his death from an apparent accidental shooting, counselors at Hastings Middle School prepared for grief-stricken students today.

A 15-year-old friend told police he accidentally fired the shot, believing the handgun he wielded was not loaded.

Hastings police said four teens were inside an apartment in the 100 block of West Center Street when the shot rang out about 3:30 p.m. Sunday. The victim was hit in the head.

While most area school districts have spring break this week, Hastings' students were off last week and returned to class today.

"It was the final day of spring break, and they were messing around with a gun," said Dustin Primm, who knew both the victim and shooter.

Hastings police did not immediately name the victim, but his family identified him as Dylan Dennie, an eighth-grader at Hastings Middle School.

"He was a good kid. Everyone loved him," said a woman who identified herself as Dylan's stepmother.

Dylan's father, Donald, said his son loved NASCAR and wanted to buy a 1957 Chevy. Devastated by the death, he was unable to speak further Sunday.

Hastings Police Chief Jerry Sarver said the two boys were inside the apartment with two girls, but it was not clear whether the girls witnessed the shooting. Sarver did not know what the boys were doing just before the shooting, nor who owned the gun.

A friend of both boys described them as "really great kids. They were inseparable."

The friend wasn't there when the shooting occurred, but said he saw police escorting one boy out of the building.

"I saw (him) crying," he said. "They just put him in the back of a police car. They didn't even arrest him."

Hastings High School Principal Timothy Johnston said middle school administrators and counselors began meeting shortly after the death to prepare for today.

He described the death as "absolutely tragic."

-- Press writer Jeff Kaczmarczyk contributed to this story.

MORNING SUN

Suspended day care licensees tell their side of the story

By Lisa Satayut
Sun Staff Writer

When John and Rebecca Chiodini welcomed their son back home six months ago, they said they didn't think twice about notifying the Department of Human Services.

Their son, 27-year-old Michael Chiodini, is a convicted sex offender and his mother runs a day care center out of their home. Under Michigan law, the Chiodinis were required to report their son's presence in the house.

"We are guilty, my son is on the list and we didn't report it," John Chiodini said. After the Department of Human Services received an anonymous tip, it suspended the license of RJ's Day Care for two years.

"The punishment does not fit the crime," John said of the two-year license suspension.

The Chiodinis have been running the day care center in Mt. Pleasant for 14 years and Rebecca Chiodini was close to retiring.

As Rebecca sat next to her husband she was close to tears.

"Her life was ripped apart," John said of Rebecca.

"It's not just a business to us, they are a part of our family," Rebecca said of the children.

"We would take them camping with us and spend holidays together," she said.

John said they were distraught after learning that they would no longer be able to keep the day care center.

But both said what happened next shocked them.

"We screwed up, but the aftermath was over the top," John said of some media coverage.

"They were looking to sensationalize the story," he said. "It was overblown and out of proportion."

Although the family admits they did not follow the correct procedure, they said their son is not a sexual predator and that the children were never in any harm.

Now the Chiodinis are asking for a chance to tell their side of the story.

John said he has always tried to be supportive of Michael, who has not always made the right decisions throughout his life.

"As a parent it's hard to watch your child make poor decisions," he said. John said he has tried to help Michael through his alcohol problems and past run-ins with the law. Isabella County District Court records show past offenses and a probation violation.

Although it has not always been easy, John said his son, who currently shares custody of his 3-year-old child with a former girlfriend, is not a sexual predator.

He had consensual sex with a minor, John said. The female minor was 15 years old and Michael Chiodini was 24. He registered with the sex offender registry on Feb. 3, 2006.

The family said they have received over 50 letters and cards of support from friends in the community.

Cynthia Devers wrote both to the Chiodini family and the Morning Sun. In that letter she said her two children have attended the day care center since they were babies. Devers said that she, as well as the other parents, knew about Michael being in the house.

"Therefore, we are not victims of an unscrupulous person. Instead, we feel blessed to have found a woman and a family, who cares as much about our children and their development and welfare as we do," Devers said.

The Chiodinis plan on fighting the license suspension. They have had a child care license since May 12, 1994.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.themorningsun.com/stories/040708/loc_side.shtml

Flint City Councilman Ehren Gonzales put in jail over domestic dispute

by Kristyn Peterson and Shannon Murphy | The Flint Journal

Monday April 07, 2008, 8:59 AM



Ehren Gonzales, Flint City councilman

FLINT, Michigan -- City Councilman Ehren Gonzales was taken to the Flint city jail Sunday morning after a domestic dispute, police said.

Police would not release details of the incident, which is believed to have involved Gonzales and his wife.

Mayor Don Williamson confirmed Gonzales, the 8th Ward councilman, was arrested, but said he didn't know anything further about the incident.

"Ehren Gonzales is a very nice person," he said. "I don't know enough about what happened, if anything," said Williamson.

Attorney Frank Manley, representing Gonzales, said his client was expected to be released from jail about 8 a.m. today.

He said Gonzales has an "outstanding record of public service and we look forward to putting this behind us."

At least one councilwoman is asking Gonzales to take a leave of absence.

"Councilman Gonzales needs some professional help because anytime you abuse anything, you need help," said Councilwoman Jackie Poplar.

In December 2006, Gonzales asked Poplar to resign after she was accused of coercing business owners to donate to a scholarship fund.

"I think he needs to take a leave of absence and get things straightened out," Poplar said. "I'm not going to do like he did to me. I'll leave it to his constituents to determine whether he leaves office permanently."

Gonzales, 36, was elected to represent the 8th Ward in a close race in 2005, defeating incumbent Lawrence B. Murphy by only 58 votes.

Since taking office, Gonzales largely has been considered an ally of Mayor Don Williamson.

Whether Gonzales resigns should be up to his constituents, said Councilman Scott Kincaid.

"It's a tragic situation, something Ehren will have to deal with," Kincaid said. "He answers to his constituents, not to us, so it's really up to him and his constituents to see what happens."

Gonzales is a former member of the Mott Community College Board of Trustees. He received his master's degree in business administration from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University.

He works in Livonia as a purchasing analyst for Ford. and is the son of State Rep. Lee Gonzales, D-Flint Twp. Rep. Gonzales could not be reached for comment.

Councilman Sheldon Neeley also declined to comment until he'd heard more about the situation, while Councilwoman Sandy Hill said only that Gonzales "is a good person" and "I hope everything works out for him."

Gonzales will be up for reelection in 2009.

Pajamas sought for homeless Grand Rapids kids

Posted by [Erin Albanese | The Grand Rapids Press](#)

April 07, 2008 08:19AM



Press Photo/Lance WynnDiane Brink, left, of Hudsonville, Ann DeBoer, center, of Dorr, and Kathy Fencil, right, of Georgetown Township, along with a group of pajama-clad children, are part of a drive to collect and donate sleepwear to homeless children in Grand Rapids shelters.

GRAND RAPIDS -- Their beds are not their own but, now, at least their pajamas will be.

Grand Rapids Public Schools administrator Mattie Hampton has helped provide 717 homeless students this school year with items such as socks, undershirts, hats and scarves. Now, Hampton can add pajamas to that list.

Diane Brink, of the Horizon Complex, a children's fitness center in Georgetown Township, has organized "The Great Pajama Giveaway," seeking donations of new pajamas for school-age children in Grand Rapids. Brink modeled the program after one in Florida where students were excited to receive their first pajamas.

"If we can make homeless kids feel good about themselves by giving them pajamas -- what a neat thing to do," she said.

"When you're homeless you're in need of everything," said Hampton, director of community and student services. "Whatever the need is we try to accommodate."

The school district tries to meet those needs because they tie into students' success, Hampton said.

"The main focus is assessing their educational needs and keeping them in school," she said.

Local shelters send lists of items students need, from backpacks to shoes and underwear. The district collects hats and scarves at Christmastime and items for Thanksgiving baskets.

At In the Image, 1823 Burton St. SW, a nonprofit organization that links people with clothing and other items, the first focus is the essentials such as pants or winter coats, said Executive Director Paul Haagsma said. But it's nice to be able to provide the basics and then some -- such as pajamas.

He witnessed the excitement of teenage girls who received prom dresses after a local radio station promoted the movie "21 Dresses." One hundred prom dresses were donated to In the Image.

"A lot of the stuff that we do here is a way of very tangibly saying 'you are not forgotten,'" Haagsma said.

Hampton said the district also is delivering nearly \$8,000 worth of socks and underwear for boys and girls. The items are paid for with federal grant money.

"The best thing for us to do with the money is purchase the things that they need," Hampton said.

The Great Pajama Giveaway

The need: Donate new pajamas for homeless children in Grand Rapids, toddler to adult sizes

Drop off: Horizon Complex, 6462 Center Industrial Drive

Deadline: May 1

<p>TURNAROUND MANAGEMENT CONSULTING</p> <p>LITIGATION SUPPORT & EXPERT TESTIMONY</p> <p>LOW-COST COUNTRY SOURCING</p>	 <p>www.c-m-d.com</p>	<p>OPERATIONS CONSULTING & INTERIM EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT</p> <p>FORENSIC ACCOUNTING & FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS</p> <p>INVESTMENT BANKING SERVICES</p>
<p>DETROIT NEW YORK CHICAGO ATLANTA DAYTON SHANGHAI</p>		

3:01 am, April 7, 2008

Michael DeVos was hired to make unpopular decisions and change the state's system for awarding low-income housing projects. He did both and ran afoul of entrenched interests. Was his resignation a

Culture clash or power play?

By [Daniel Duggan](#)



When the state's housing authority set out to find a new director in 2005, a memo crafted for the headhunter laid out the expectations.

Develop an urban housing agenda, it stated. Change the process for choosing low-income housing developers who receive federal tax incentives. Be able to make "unpopular decisions."

By all accounts, Michael DeVos nailed those goals as executive director of the **Michigan State Housing and Development Authority**.

But DeVos was pressured to resign March 14 after his efforts to change MSHDA's policies caused a rift in the low-income housing development community.

Those close to MSHDA say it was a case of a passionate outsider coming into an organization hell-bent on changing it — while the interests who have benefited over the years pushed back.

"He just gave up at the end," said Kathy Makino, president of Wayne-based **Shelborne Development**, which has done a lot of MSHDA development work. "He felt like he was being attacked in all areas."

The proposed changes revolved around the distribution of money through the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. Michigan, like every state, allocates developer incentives according to the guidelines of a Qualified Allocation Plan written at the state level. Developers follow the QAP as a guide to propose low-income housing projects.

The incentives for developers are tax credits they can sell to investors to offset the costs of housing projects. Investors buy the credits at a discount but can apply them at face value to their own tax obligations.

DeVos proposed to revamp the QAP to give the lucrative work to developers outside a small circle; to focus on housing needs in Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park; and ensure housing is built for those with special needs.

His actions stirred controversy in the development community. Developers argued the guidelines were too strict and didn't allow the market to dictate decisions.

Since DeVos' resignation, a Boston-based consultant hired by the MSHDA board issued a report saying that neither the QAP created before DeVos nor his proposed QAP offers enough flexibility and incentives to draw investors to Michigan. The group calls for "emergency actions," saying that if the \$180 million to \$200 million in equity isn't found, it goes back to the federal government to be allocated rather than by Michigan.

Advertisement



A vision and a dictate

A look at applicants

Crain's reviewed three representative applications entered in the 2007 round of tax credit applications.

In each case, the developer proposed a rental development, found lending and found investors willing to purchase the tax credits allocated to the project.

All of the applications were reviewed by the **Michigan State Housing and Development Authority** then entered in a lottery if they complied with the Qualified Allocation Plan. Of the 114 applications, 88 qualified and 26 were chosen out of the lottery. Those not chosen in the lottery can reapply. The three are:

- **Perry Square**

17250 Raupp Ave., Melvindale Township

Developer: **Shelborne Development**

Type of project: 24-unit rehab

Total project cost: \$3 million

10-year tax credit proceeds: \$2 million

Developer fee and overhead: \$390,000

Builder profit*: \$114,000

Management fee*: \$70,600/year

Annual income, less operational costs: \$90,600 to \$109,200

Status: Approved

- **Phoenix Place Apartments**

47251 Woodward Ave., Pontiac

Type of project: 200-unit rehab

Developer: **Amurcon Corp.**

Total project cost: \$13.7 million

10-year tax credit proceeds: \$7.7 million

Developer fee and overhead: \$1 million

Management fee*: \$81,600/year

Annual income, less operational costs: \$494,700 to \$708,800

Status: Qualified, but was not chosen in the lottery

- **Woodlake Hills**

30100 Telegraph Road, Bingham Farms

Type of project: 144-unit rehab

Developer: **Lockwood Cos.**

Total project cost: \$9.8 million

10-year tax credit proceeds: \$5.2 million

Developer fee and overhead: \$1 million

Builder profit*: \$176,700

Management fee*: \$56,300/year

Annual income, less operational costs: \$1 million to \$1.4 million

Status: Was not entered in the lottery

*Builder or management company is listed on the application as a "related entity" of the developer.

— *Daniel Duggan*

DeVos, who said through former co-workers that he will not do interviews, spent his professional life in Maine. He had been director of development for the **Maine State Housing Authority** since 1995.

Harvard-educated, DeVos started as a real estate salesman in 1982 and became a developer in 1984. In 1991, he entered the nonprofit world with a position at **Resources for Community Development**, which is dedicated to creating affordable housing.

DeVos, who is not related to the DeVos family of Amway fame, was recruited to Michigan.

"I am approaching my move to Michigan and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority as a challenging journey that will give me a chance to work in a field that is near and dear to me," he said in a press release announcing his appointment in 2005.

He was an outsider with a vision, said Mary Levine, who was hired by DeVos last year to serve as director of legal affairs. She is currently acting director of administrative services.

"Here's a guy from Maine, he doesn't know anybody. He doesn't look like a developer or talk like a developer," she said. "He had a mission statement, a vision statement and he just went and did it."

DeVos attempted to change the landscape of low-income housing by introducing stronger regulations for developers to follow. The state's QAP had undergone minor changes since Gov. Jennifer Granholm was elected. Changing that process was a dictate from the administration, Levine said.

At the heart of the process were structural problems, she said. A major issue: The same developers were getting all the grants and building housing in areas where it wasn't needed.

"They had a system in place that was in place for a long time," she said. "They were building plain-brown wrappers dropped into cornfields. They got really good at it. It was like producing widgets."

"Developers did a lot of new construction. It was easy for them, and they made a lot of money."

As part of the process, developers are paid fees of up to \$1 million for the risk of overseeing the projects. In addition, some also earn fees for owning, building and managing the projects. (*See box.*)

Major changes were:

- A mandate that 50 percent of all housing developments be built in Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park, where there is the greatest need right now, Levine said.
- A requirement that 10 percent of the developments be for "supportive living," or special-needs residents. Levine said Michigan is not in line with national trends.
- Giving a preference to environmentally friendly development, Levine said, following the national trend.
- Requiring developers to find two investors to purchase tax credits, instead of one, to ensure they are finding the best deal.

Developers erupt

During the public comment period leading up to the MSHDA board's vote on the plan, nearly 200 letters were received from people interested in the process, DeVos said in his written comments to the MSHDA board before its vote on the QAP.

Amid the letters, DeVos found a firestorm of complaints.

The changes were completely wrong for the current housing environment, said Scott Larry, head of the **Michigan Housing Council**, an advocacy group representing developers who do work for MSHDA.

"The market zigged, but he zagged," he said. "The changes would have been right four years ago or maybe 10 years from now. But they are wrong now."

In a 21-page letter Larry wrote to DeVos and the MSHDA board, he called it "burdensome" to developers and said it

"ignores national trends, severely restricting incentives for the preservation of affordable housing."

He said the state should be using creativity and incentives in partnership with the private sector to create housing that is economically successful and useful to consumers, rather than using "cram-downs" to change the nature of housing.

Levine admits many of the developers are not ready for changes, but she said some developers found a way to use the QAP. The housing council continued to lobby against the plan and against DeVos.

"When you think you're in control of a process, and then you find out that you are not in control," she said, "you start complaining."

Investor demand

Jim Logue, MSHDA director from 1991 to 2004, is now COO for the Lansing-based **Great Lakes Capital Fund**, which raises capital from investors, finds developments that qualify for credits, and then passes on the tax benefits to the investors.

In the midst of a national shortage of lending, it is becoming harder and harder to find investors willing to lend money for any kind of real estate, he said. Tax credits are currently selling for around 80 cents on the dollar but are getting lower each quarter.

"The yields on real estate investment will need to go up in order to attract investment," he said.

The approaches in the plan don't make the process easier, but rather make it even harder to invest in Michigan, Logue said.

"It wasn't going to be sufficient to new investors or old investors," he said. "This put Michigan on a low rung of investor appeal."

He said complaints against an "urban agenda" are misplaced.

"These foundations invest in urban areas," he said. "That wasn't the issue. The issue was a plan that wasn't conducive to drawing investors."

Pass and fail

DeVos' plan passed the MSHDA board Dec. 6 with seven "yes" votes and one abstention, Levine said. However, approval by Granholm's office was needed before implementation. And that process wasn't as smooth.

A Dec. 21 letter signed by Granholm accused DeVos and the MSHDA board of threatening to block future allocations of new development unless she approved the new plan. Granholm, in the letter, called that "unacceptable."

She went on to demand the board's vote be rescinded, that the QAP carry on under old rules and an expert be hired to review the plan.

Levine said the governor's staff misinterpreted the situation: that tax credits would still be issued and were not being used as a chit to force passage of the QAP.

"Her staff was fully briefed," she said. "Many times."

Asked about the letter and DeVos' resignation, the following statement was released:

"Mr. DeVos was very committed to his work and we appreciate his service in this very important area. We know the board and the agency staff will continue to work together to ensure that their important work continues."

MSHDA Chairman Bernie Gliberman responded to Granholm with a letter dated Feb. 7, indicating the board's desire for an outside consultant to review the plan, per Granholm's request.

Gliberman said the outside input is not a slam against DeVos or the staff but a step to help simplify the process.

Mario Morrow, director of communications for the Department of Labor and Economic Growth, which oversees MSHDA, said DeVos' resignation came after "stalemates" between the board and developers.

"For the betterment of the department, Mr. DeVos and the board came to an agreement that a separation needed to take place," he said. "Therefore, he resigned."

Whether the QAP and developer uproar is linked to DeVos' resignation, Gliberman would only say "his philosophies and

the board's were different; therefore, he felt it was time to move on." Gliberman would not elaborate on the difference in philosophy.

A stern review

The independent review was equally unkind to DeVos and his plan.

Boston-based **Recap Advisors** issued a 49-page report on March 17. The group gave the plan to housing experts in other states for review and compared Michigan's proposed QAP with other states.

"The policy imperatives that the 2008-09 QAP seeks are valid and worthy for Michigan, and achievable even in this difficult market environment, but are undone by the QAP's implementation, which creates needless obstacles, problems, and ambiguities that undermine the QAP's goals and risk Michigan being unable to use all its 2008 (tax credits) and losing it to a national pool," Recap wrote in the report's first paragraph.

Recap urged Michigan to "reduce obstacles" for developers to preserve housing stock, eliminate the "hold-backs," such as the Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park guideline, and put money in use as quickly as possible.

The consultants said changes need to be made by the third quarter and issued a stern warning.

If the low-income housing developments proposed in Michigan are not paired with willing investors, money will go unused. Money that is unused goes back to a national pool overseen by the federal government.

As it is, Michigan receives more federal housing money than 45 other states, according to Recap, putting it in a leveraged position.

"Right now, there is a very material risk that MSHDA will be a net contributor to the national pool — and with 45 other states having a higher relative demand than Michigan; if the Michigan (tax credit) becomes available, other states will likely capture it."

'Tone deaf'

Despite the barrage of negative opinions, DeVos kept a positive spin on his administration as he left the office.

In a goodbye letter written to the MSHDA staff, he painted a picture of the successes of his term and the good financial condition the agency is in.

"It has been both the most challenging and most rewarding three years of my career," he wrote. "There has been a significant level of change during this time, all of which will make MSHDA more effective at fulfilling our mission, so that we may benefit the people and communities we serve."

Levine — who has worked in state government since the 1970s — said DeVos was well-intentioned but may not have been as tuned-in to problems as he should have been.

"He was a little tone deaf," she said. "He tried to change the deal that (developers) were so used to. He oriented the process to the homeless, not the developers. And they pushed back."

Daniel Duggan: (313) 446-0414, dduggan@crain.com

© 2007 Crain Communications Inc.

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **hometownlife.com**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Apr 6, 2008

Healthy Affair offers free health care

Free health care services will be offered to Oakland County residents at the sixth annual Healthy Affair 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, April 19, at the Welcome Ministry Baptist Church, 143 Oneida Road in Pontiac.

Doctors and staff members of POH Regional Medical Center, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland, North Oakland Medical Center, William Beaumont Hospital and private practice physicians are donating their time to benefit underserved and uninsured men, women and children.

Participating agencies offering services include Oakland Primary Health Services, OLHSA's Multi-Cultural Health Council, MPRO-Michigan's Quality Improvement Organization, Pontiac Health Initiative and the American Heart Association.

A children's play area will be available during the screening process.

According to the Michigan Department of Community Health, one in eight Michigan residents younger than 65 has no health insurance. For the more than one million adults and children in the state facing this, chronic diseases such as diabetes or asthma continue to go undetected. Potentially terminal illnesses, such as cancer and heart disease, are sometimes not diagnosed until it is too late.

Free services that will be provided during the event include mammogram referrals, breast exams, podiatry, ophthalmology, dentistry screenings, HIV, AIDS and Hepatitis C testing, hand washing station, hospice/cancer screening, basic screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes, family medicine, pediatric care, nutritional advice, oral cancer screening, stroke and heart disease testing/assessment and ear/hearing tests.

Information on discount prescription drugs and other forms of health insurance coverage will be provided by the Oakland County Health Department

Free transportation to the Healthy Affair is available, but registration is required. Call Welcome Baptist Church at (248) 335-8799 by Wednesday, April 16, to reserve transportation or for additional information.

Food pantry to open in May

Posted by [Monetta L. Harr | Jackson Citizen Patriot](#)

April 07, 2008 09:26AM

A new Jackson food pantry will open in early May in the new American Red Cross building, 3425 Francis St. It will be open every Wednesday evening with no restrictions on how often people come for food.

It is being organized by members of Queen of the Miraculous Medal Catholic Church, 606 S. Wisner St., but is an ecumenical effort.

"This is Christ's mission, that's what we are all about," said the Rev. Robert McGraw, senior pastor.

When he arrived at the parish four years ago, McGraw said he heard about the food pantry at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1505 W. Michigan Ave.

"I learned they were open on Saturday mornings, but what happens to feed people midweek? One weekend I preached a challenge to set a goal to at some point open another food pantry on Wednesdays, and here we are," McGraw said.

As final work is being done on the facility, it has become a project that "was meant to be" according to Mark Smith, a member of Queen's and religion education director at St. Mary Catholic Church, 301 S. Mechanic St.

He explained that Queen's had 135 members who wanted to volunteer at Immanuel's food pantry, but only 30 were needed. From not wanting to waste that time and talent, and wanting to feed people midweek, came the inspiration to open another pantry.

The "meant to be" part came when the Red Cross recently moved into its spacious new location and offered room to store pantry items and a separate room to distribute it to people.

"We're honored to give them the space," said Larry Lloyd, blood services director.

"We learned from Hurricane Katrina that a lot of people are never thought of, or never put first. We want people to come to the food pantry and associate us with helping in other ways."

Janet Jaeger, who helps with Immanuel's pantry and is a member of End Hunger in Jackson, a coalition of food pantries that meets on a monthly basis, said she is delighted with the new facility.

Immanuel's pantry, Jaeger said, started in 2003 with a dozen families. Today it averages 260 families, with some Saturdays seeing more than 300.

"We want to have more food available in our community, and that location will be convenient for clients who can't get here. You know, we really can end hunger," she said.

Once the new pantry is up and running, McGraw said volunteers will take it a step further by offering people an "assessment" of their needs and helping them meet those needs. For instance, maybe a person has never been taught budgeting skills. Or a person needs help creating a resume or learning which agencies to call for specific assistance.

"We know they really don't want to be walking in the door asking for food. We want to help rebuild their dignity so the next time they come in it's as a volunteer to work at the pantry," McGraw said.

LUDINGTON DAILY NEWS STAFF -
Sunday, April 6, 2008

2-1-1 number operational now

It took a month longer than expected, but the 2-1-1 number is fully operational, United Way of Mason County has announced. Mason and Oceana County residents are now able to dial 2-1-1 at no charge to access health and human service information, referrals and volunteer opportunities. This number is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. By calling 211, individuals can be connected with hundreds of programs and services. An on-line database is also available on the Web at www.211.org

Michigan Department of Human Services News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet or Colleen Steinman (517) 373-7394

A last-minute check can help save children Income tax filers can still make a donation to the Children's Trust Fund

April 7, 2008

It's not too late for last minute income tax filers to improve the lives of children by using the Children's Trust Fund Michigan income tax check-off.

"A small donation will make a very big difference in the life of a child," said Richard Bearup, the trust fund's executive director. "For every dollar spent in prevention, we save up to \$34 in treatment and other care."

State law reinstated the trust fund's income tax check-off for individuals to designate a contribution of \$5 or more from the refund be credited to prevention efforts.

From 1983 through 2000 a check-off on Michigan's income tax form allowed an individual to donate \$2 or more of his or her refund. During that time, more than 2.2 million Michigan tax returns generated over \$14.8 million for the Children's Trust Fund. Since the check-off has been reintroduced, more than \$815,000 has been raised, including \$74,500 from income tax returns filed in February 2008.

"The people of Michigan are very generous and very supportive of efforts to help protect Michigan's children," Bearup said. "Many of these dollars are invested back into the donor's communities."

The Children's Trust Fund is the only statewide, non-profit organization in Michigan dedicated solely to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Housed administratively within DHS, the Trust Fund supports 72 local child abuse and neglect councils, representing 82 of Michigan's 83 counties.

In addition to the income tax check-off, residents wishing to contribute to child abuse prevention efforts can do so by sending a check or money order directly to the CTF at P.O. Box 30037, Lansing, MI 48909. Residents are also encouraged to participate in local fund raising activities or volunteer efforts.

For more information about the Children's Trust Fund, go to www.michigan.gov/ctf